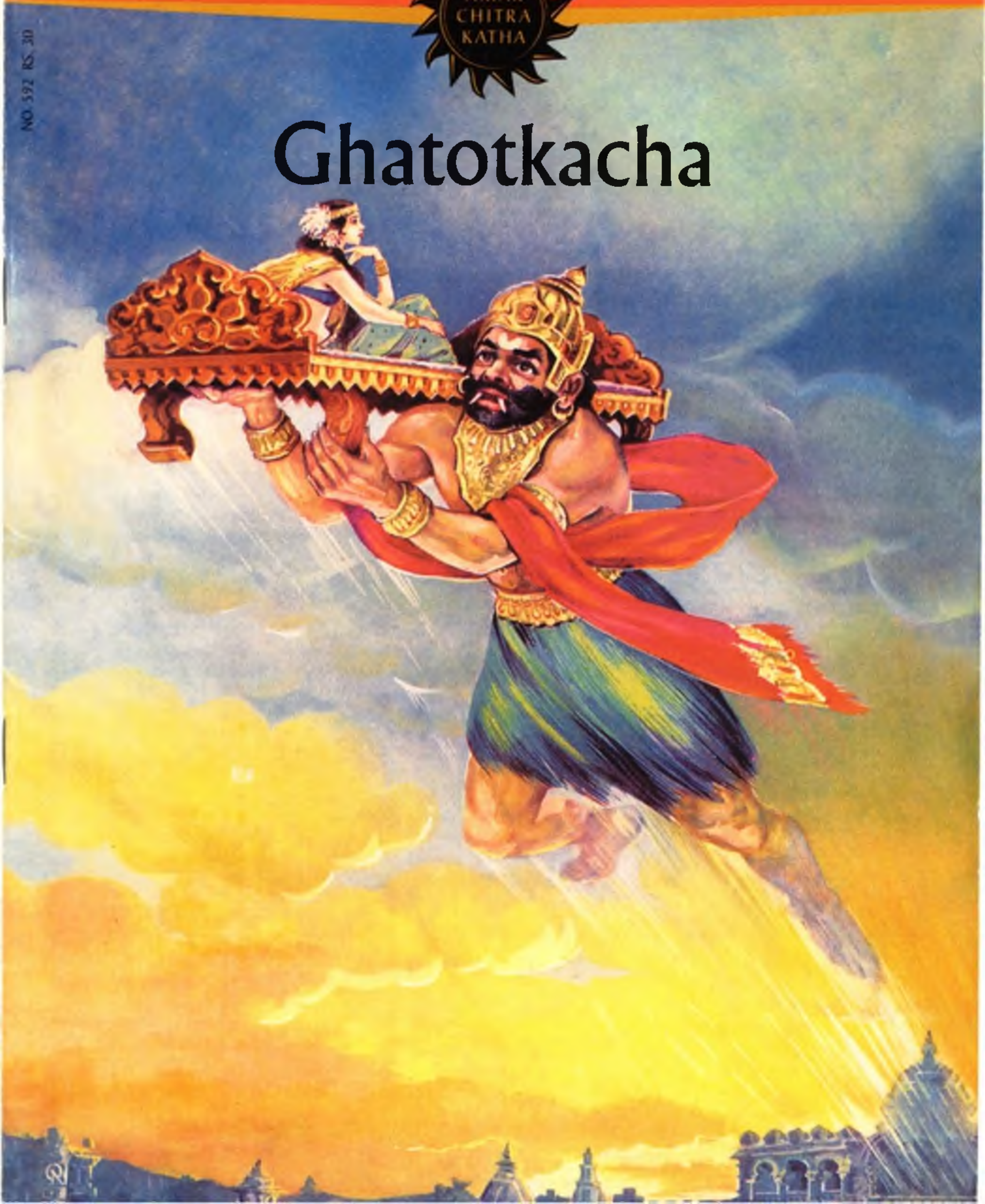
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Ghatotkacha



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THE KAURAVA PRINCES AND THE ORPHANED PANDAVA PRINCES WERE COUSINS. THEY GREW UP TOGETHER AT HASTINAPURA IN THE CHARGE OF THEIR GRAND-UNCLE, BHEESHMA.


BUT THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR COUSINS.
UNCLE BHEESHMA IS PARTIAL TO THE PANDAVAS.
THE PEOPLE TOO LOVE THEM MORE THAN US.
JEALOUSY SOON TURNED INTO HATRED. DURYODHANA, THE ELDEST KAURAVA THOUGHT OF A WICKED PLAN.
WE WILL SEND THEM TO VARANAVATA TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF LAC. AND THEN SET FIRE TO IT.
WHEN THE PANDAVAS ARRIVED AT VARANAVATA, YUDHISHTHIRA, THE ELDEST OF THEM TURNED TO THE OTHERS–
THIS IS A TRAP!
THE PANDAVAS SECRETLY HAD A TUNNEL MADE FOR ESCAPE.
BEFORE WE LEAVE, WE MUST SET FIRE TO THIS HOUSE.
AFTER SETTING THE HOUSE ON FIRE, THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, KUNTI, ESCAPED THROUGH THE TUNNEL.


WHEN THEY WERE DEEP IN THE FOREST:-
I AM TIRED, MOTHER.
I KNOW. BUT WE CANNOT STOP NOW. BHEEMA, CAN YOU CARRY HIM ?
BHEEMA WAS THE STRONGEST OF THEM ALL.
I CAN CARRY ALL OF YOU.
WHEN THEY HAD TRAVELLED FAR ENOUGH-
NOW WE MAY REST.
YOU ARE ALL TIRED. I AM NOT. YOU SLEEP. I'LL KEEP WATCH.
HIDIMBA, A RAKSHASA WAS THE MASTER OF THAT FOREST.
SISTER HIDIMBAA! I SMELL HUMANS. BRING THEM HERE. WE SHALL FEAST ON FRESH MEAT.
M..M...M...M..! MY MOUTH WATERS!



WHEN HIDIMBAA CAME IN SEARCH OF THE PANDAVAS SHE SAW BHEEMA FIRST.
HOW HANDSOME HE IS! I DON'T WANT TO EAT HIM. I'LL MARRY HIM.
I SHALL CHANGE MYSELF INTO A BEAUTIFUL GIRL. THEN HE WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.
MEANWHILE–
HIDIMBAA IS LATE. HAS SHE...? IS SHE...? NO IT CANNOT BE! YET I WONDER...
AS I SUSPECTED! SHE HAS CHANGED HER FORM AND IS MAKING EYES AT THAT HUMAN.
HIDIMBA CHALLENGED BHEEMA AND THEY FOUGHT.
THE NOISE AWOKE KUNTI.
YUDHISHTHIRA! GET UP!


KUNTI, HIDIMBAA AND YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED FORWARD.
BHEEMA! BE CAREFUL!
DO NOT FEAR MOTHER. YOUR BRAVE SON WILL WIN.
MY BLESSINGS, BHEEMA!
HIDIMBA WAS KILLED. KUNTI NOW TURNED TO HIDIMBAA.
YOU ARE VERY BEAUTI-FUL! WHO ARE YOU?
THAT WAS MY BROTHER. I LOVE YOUR SON. I DESERTED MY BROTHER FOR HIM.
I HAVE NO ONE NOW. LET ME MARRY YOUR SON, MOTHER.
WE ARE HOME-LESS.
I AM THE MISTRESS OF THIS FOREST. STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU WISH.
KUNTI CONSULTED YUDHISHTHIRA.
LET HER MARRY BHEEMA.
IT IS ONLY FAIR, MOTHER.
SO BHEEMA MARRIED HIDIMBAA.


HIDIMBAA WAS A DEVOTED DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.
MOTHER, I MAY LIVE WITH YOU TILL YOUR GRANDSON IS BORN. THEN WE WILL HAVE TO PART.
NOT LONG AFTER, BHEEMA'S SON, GHATOTKACHA, WAS BORN. BEING A RAKSHASA HE KNEW ALL THEIR MAGIC AND WAS FULL-GROWN AT BIRTH.
FATHER! I AM THE LORD OF THIS FOREST. WHEN-EVER YOU THINK OF ME I WILL COME AND SERVE YOU.
WE WILL GO ON! GOD BLESS YOU.
THE PANDAVAS WENT THEIR WAY AND GHATOTKACHA LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER IN THEIR FOREST.


MANY YEARS PASSED BY. THE PANDAVAS BECAME THE RULERS OF INDRAPRASTHA WHERE THEY BUILT A BEAUTIFUL PALACE. YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE. THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR SUCCESS.
WE MUST DO SOMETHING. THE PANDAVAS ARE TOO POPULAR AND PROSPEROUS.
I HAVE AN IDEA. LET US INVITE YUDHISHTHIRA TO PLAY DICE.
WE WILL MARK THE DICE AND CHEAT HIM.
SO THE KAURAVAS INVITED THE PANDAVAS TO HASTINAPURA.
SHALL WE BEGIN?
A KING CANNOT REFUSE. WE WILL PLAY.
YUDHISHTHIRA PLAYED AND LOST ALL HIS WEALTH.
COME! STAKE YOUR KINGDOM NOW.
AGREED!
HE LOST HIS KINGDOM TOO. BUT HE CONTINUED TO PLAY.
WILL YOU AGREE TO GO TO THE FOREST FOR 13 YEARS IF YOU LOSE? IF YOU WIN I'LL GIVE BACK YOUR KINGDOM.
ALL RIGHT!
YUDHISHTHIRA LOST. THE PANDAVAS HAD TO LEAVE FOR THE FOREST, WITH DRAUPADI, THEIR QUEEN.



* DURYODHANA'S SON.

• BALARAMA'S DAUGHTER


AFTER A TOUGH FIGHT–
ALAS! HOW DID A MERE HUMAN OVERPOWER YOU?
WHO IS HE?
THE SON OF BHEEMA, THE PANDAVA.
I AM ARJUNA'S WIFE, SUBHADRA... MY SON...
STOP! ABHIMANYU! HE IS YOUR UNCLE BHEEMA'S SON! YOUR COUSIN!
BROTHER! FORGIVE ME! I DID NOT KNOW YOU.


SUBHADRA TOLD HER STORY.
SISTER! MY BROTHER, BALARAMA, HAS GONE BACK ON HIS WORD.
ABHIMANYU WAS BETROTHED TO HIS DAUGH-TER, VATSALA.
BUT NOW THAT ARJUNA IS IN EXILE, VATSALA IS TO MARRY LAKSHMANA, THE SON OF THE KAURAVA, DURYO-DHANA.
WE ARE GOING TO DWARAKA TO TRY AND PREVENT IT.
GHATOTKACHA PROMISED TO HELP THEM.
DON'T WORRY, MOTHER! TAKE OUR GUESTS HOME. I WILL SETTLE THIS MATTER.


GHATOTKACHA CALLED HIS RAKSHASAS.
MEN! GO TO DWARAKA. BUY UP ALL THE SHOPS THERE AND...
WHEN HE HAD FINISHED–
THEN WAIT FOR MY SIGNAL.
THE RAKSHASAS WENT TO DWARAKA AND BOUGHT UP ALL THE SHOPS. THEN–
NEW CLOTHES FOR OLD.
DO YOU REALLY EXCHANGE THEM?
UNBELIEVABLE! SHOPS IN DWARAKA EXCHANGE OLD CLOTHES FOR NEW ONES.
THE KAURAVAS WHO HAD COME FOR THE WEDDING, FLOCKED TO THE SHOPS.
THESE NEW CLOTHES ARE OF A SUPERIOR QUALITY.
WHAT A NOVEL WAY OF ENTER-TAINING THE BRIDE-GROOM'S PARTY.



MEANWHILE GHATOTKACHA ENTERED VATSALA'S ROOM.
I COME FROM ABHIMANYU! READ THIS.
VATSALA READ ABHIMANYU'S MESSAGE.
COME! SIT DOWN AND DO NOT BE AFRAID.
MY LORD TELLS ME TO OBEY YOU.
GHATOTKACHA PICKED UP VATSALA'S BED AND FLEW OUT OF THE WINDOW.
YOU SHALL SOON BE WITH ABHIMANYU AND MOTHER SUBHADRA.


GHATOTKACHA LEFT VATSALA WITH ABHIMANYU AND RETURNED TO DWARAKA.
I MUST NOW TRANSFORM MYSELF TO LOOK LIKE VATSALA...
...AND TAKE HER PLACE.
THE NEXT MORNING THE BRIDE WAS LED TO THE MARRIAGE HALL.
I SHALL NOW SQUEEZE HIS HAND TILL IT BREAKS.
O..O..O! HOW TIGHT HER GRIP IS!


GHATOTKACHA SQUEEZED LAKSHMANA'S HAND SO HARD THAT HE FAINTED.
HA! HA!
AND GHATOTKACHA FLEW AWAY WITH HIS MEN.
COME! OUR WORK IS DONE. LET US GO!
WITH THEM THE NEW CLOTHES ALSO FLEW AWAY.
WE CAN'T EVEN GO AFTER THEM!
OUR CLOTHES ARE FLYING AWAY!

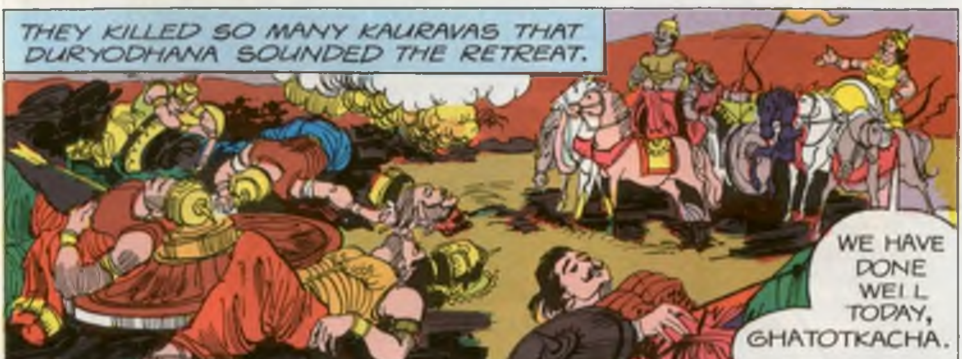


THE NEXT DAY, SUBHADRA ARRIVED AT DWARAKA WITH ABHIMANYU AND HIS BRIDE.
BROTHER! BLESS THEM! THEY WERE MARRIED YESTERDAY, THANKS TO GHATOTKACHA.
FATHER! FORGIVE ME! I LOVE ABHIMANYU.
I AM SORRY SISTER! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
ABHIMANYU LIVED HAPPILY AT DWARAKA WITH VATSALA AND SUBHADRA.


WHEN THEIR EXILE WAS OVER, THE PANDAVAS RETURNED FROM THE FOREST. THE KAURAVAS WOULD NOT GIVE BACK THEIR KINGDOM. SO THE PANDAVAS COLLECTED THEIR ARMIES TO FIGHT THEM. LORD KRISHNA WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE PANDAVAS–
BHEEMA! YOU MUST CALL GHATOTKACHA. WE WILL NEED HIS HELP. DON'T YOU AGREE, KRISHNA?
YES. HE HELPED MY SISTER SUBHADRA WHEN SHE NEEDED HIM.
NOW HE WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HELP US.
I HAVE BUT TO THINK OF HIM.
GHATOTKACHA APPEARED WITH HIS RAKSHASA FORCES.
FATHER! HERE I AM!


THE MAHABHARATA WAR BEGAN. ON THE FOURTH DAY OF THE WAR, KING BHAGADATTA ATTACKED BHEEMA.
I WISH GHATOTKACHA WERE HERE TO HELP ME.

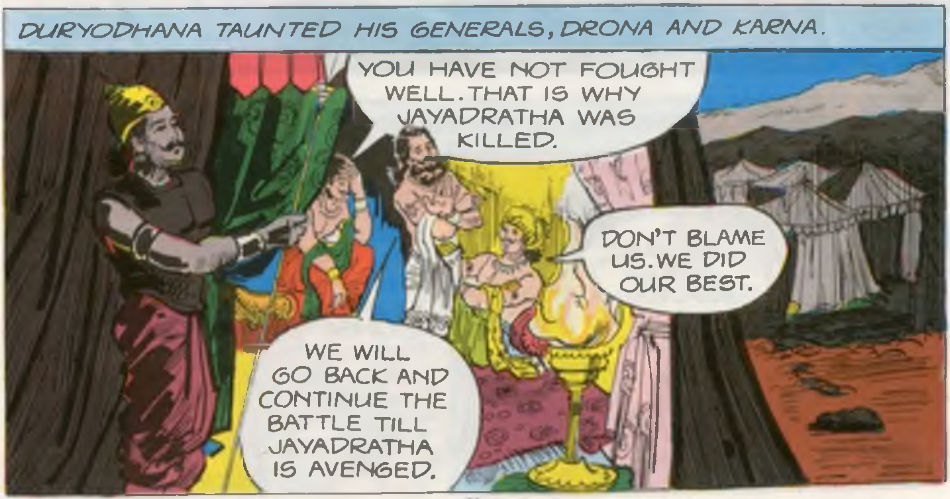

GHATOTKACHA AT ONCE CAME TO BHEEMA'S HELP.


THEY KILLED SO MANY KAURAVAS THAT DURYODHANA SOUNDED THE RETREAT.
WE HAVE DONE WELL TODAY, GHATOTKACHA.


THE NEXT DAY, BHAGADATTA RETALIATED BY ATTACKING THE PANDAVAS AND KILLING MANY OF THEM.
GHATOTKACHA CAME THERE. THE KAURAVAS SAW MANY OF THEIR FRIENDS LYING DEAD.
HOW DID SO MANY OF THEM DIE ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WH...WHAT... HOW? LET US SAVE OUR LIVES!
NOT REALISING THAT IT WAS MERELY AN ILLUSION, THEY RAN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.
HA! HA! HOW EASILY THEY WERE TRICKED.


ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR, ABHIMANYU WAS KILLED.
JAYADRATHA WAS THE CAUSE OF ABHIMANYU'S DEATH. ARJUNA SWORE TO KILL HIM BY SUNSET NEXT DAY.
IF I DON'T SUCCEED, I WILL KILL MYSELF!
DURYODHANA CALLED HIS GENERALS TO HIM.
WE MUST GUARD JAYADRATHA FROM ARJUNA.
IF HE IS ALIVE AT SUNSET, ARJUNA WILL KILL HIMSELF AND THE WAR WILL END.

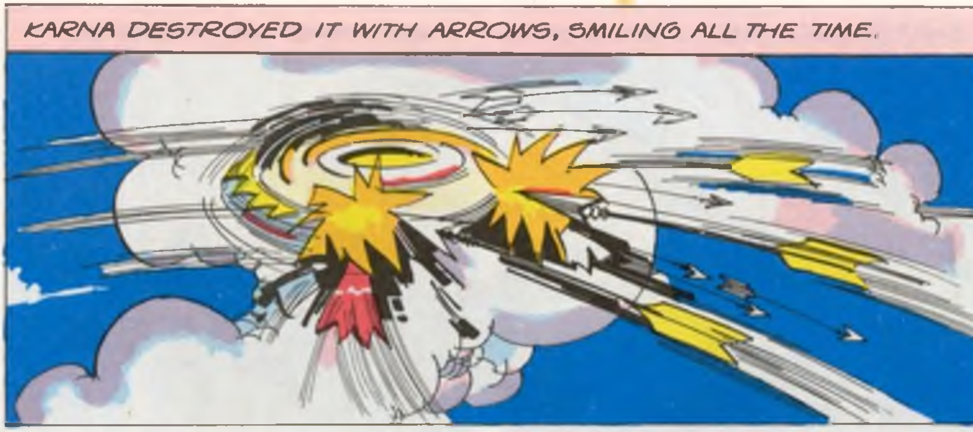

BEFORE SUNSET THE NEXT DAY, ARJUNA, WITH LORD KRISHNA'S HELP, KILLED JAYADRATHA.


DURYODHANA TAUNTED HIS GENERALS, DRONA AND KARNA.
YOU HAVE NOT FOUGHT WELL. THAT IS WHY JAYADRATHA WAS KILLED.
DON'T BLAME US. WE DID OUR BEST.
WE WILL GO BACK AND CONTINUE THE BATTLE TILL JAYADRATHA IS AVENGED.


DRONA AND KARNA FOUGHT SO WELL THAT THE PANDAVAS WERE HARD-PRESSED. YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED ARJUNA AND KRISHNA.
MY ARMIES SUFFER! GO AND FIGHT KARNA.
IT IS NOT YET TIME FOR ARJUNA TO MEET KARNA!
LORD KRISHNA SENT FOR GHATOTKACHA. WHEN HE CAME –
DEAR GHATOTKACHA! HELP OUR ARMIES AGAINST KARNA.
I WILL FINISH HIM.
RAKSHASA-POWER INCREASES BY NIGHT.
I SHALL EASILY DEFEAT KARNA WITH MY MAGIC.


I WILL SOON BRING YOU HIS HEAD.
GHATOTKACHA MET KARNA AND ATTACKED HIM.
HE HURLED A SPARKLING *CHAKRAYUDHA AT HIM.

*DISC.







* THE VAJRA ASTRA IS HARD LIKE A THUNDERBOLT AND CAN BREAK EVEN MOUNTAINS.


GHATOTKACHA MADE A DARK CLOUD WHICH RAINED DOWN STONES.
KARNA BLEW IT AWAY WITH A VAYU ASTRA.*
*VAYU ASTRA PRODUCES A STRONG WIND AS IT IS GUIDED BY THE GOD OF WIND.
GHATOTKACHA SENT TREES FLYING AT HIM.
KARNA DESTROYED THEM WITH ARROWS.


GHATOTKACHA FELL DOWN AS IF DEAD.
THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS GRIEVED.
ALAS! HE IS DEAD!
SUDDENLY THERE WERE GHATOTKACHAS EVERYWHERE.
KARNA SHOT ARROWS AT THEM ALL.

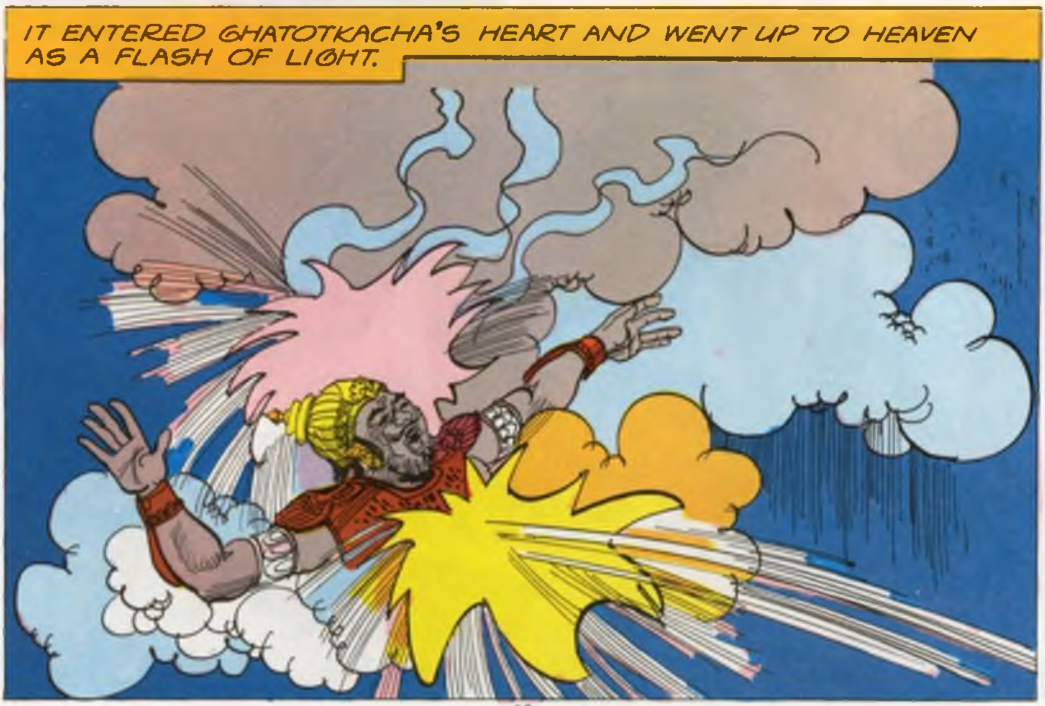

GHATOTKACHA OPENED HIS MOUTH WIDE AND SWALLOWED THE ARROWS.
KARNA ONLY SENT MORE.
GHATOTKACHA BECAME TINY AND ELUDED THEM.


THEN HE BECAME INVISIBLE AND SENT SHOWERS OF FIERY WEAPONS.
THE TERRIFIED KAURAVA FORCES APPEALED TO KARNA.
SAVE US, KARNA!
YOUR ARROWS ARE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH.
YOU ARE OUR PROTECTOR.
USE YOUR SHAKTI!
THE SHAKTI HAD BEEN GIVEN TO KARNA BY INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.
IT IS MY WEAPON. IT WILL KILL ANYONE. BUT YOU CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE. IT WILL RETURN TO ME AFTER THAT.



KARNA HESITATED TO USE THE SHAKTI.
I RESERVED IT FOR ARJUNA! I MUST NOT WASTE IT.
BUT THE CRIES OF THE WARRIORS WERE PITIABLE.
WE CAN'T SEE THE ENEMY.
YET THE WEAPONS HIT US.
WE HAVE NO SAVIOUR!
I CAN'T LET OUR WARRIORS SUFFER.
I WILL HAVE TO USE THE SHAKTI.


KARNA PICKED UP THE SHAKTI AND THREW IT.


IT ENTERED GHATOTKACHA'S HEART AND WENT UP TO HEAVEN AS A FLASH OF LIGHT.


GHATOTKACHA KNEW HE WAS DYING. HE MADE HIS BODY ENORMOUS, JUMPED INTO THE AIR...
...AND FELL, CRUSHING A WHOLE KAURAVA REGIMENT UNDER HIM.


YUDHISHTHIRA TOOK GHATOTKACHA'S HEAD ON HIS LAP AND WEPT, WHILE KRISHNA LOOKED ON, SMILING.
ALAS! GHATOTKACHA, MY BRAVE CHILD! HOW CAN YOU SMILE, KRISHNA?
GHATOTKACHA HAS SAVED ARJUNA. KARNA'S SHAKTI IS SPENT. NOW HE IS POWERLESS TO KILL ARJUNA.
BHEEMA CAME TO MOURN HIS SON.
EVEN IN HIS DEATH GHATOTKACHA HAS HELPED US.
HE DIED IN A GOOD CAUSE. HIS DEATH WILL BE JUSTIFIED BY THE PANDAVA VICTORY.

Illustrated Classics From India

Ghatotkacha

Ghatotkacha was one of the finest characters of the epic Mahabharata. Even though he was a *rakshasa* (demon), he was affectionate and kind. Being the son of the Pandava prince, Bheema and the rakshasi, Hidimbaa, he was only half *rakshasa*. From his mother he learnt all the arts of the *rakshasas*; from his father he inherited an affectionate and chivalrous temperament. He was an invaluable ally to the Pandavas in times of trouble, and appeared before them whenever they thought of him.

Vatsala's wedding to Arjuna's son Abhimanyu is a frequently recurring theme in the ballads and stories of South India. It was Ghatotkacha, who with his *rakshasa* hordes and their magical powers made the wedding of Abhimanyu and Vatsala possible.

This story is not found in the Mahabharata or in Sanskrit literature. It seems to have evolved at a much later date, as a legend in Telegu and Kannada literature. The exponents of the art of Harikatha consider this story as one of the most popular ones in their repertoire. It has been handed down by word of mouth for generations.

This Amar Chitra Katha is derived partly from the Mahabharata and partly from legend.

Editor: Anant Pai

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